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ABSTRACT

A proposal for developing models to enhance the teaching profession is described, along with the 1983-1984 activities of the Task Force on Excellence in Education of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The Task Force proposed that during the 1984-1985 academic year AASCU should conduct a competition among its member institutions for the development of program models in eight categories requiring initiatives and innovation in the teaching profession. The eight categories are as follows: attracting more talented students as majors in the field of education; developing more innovative teacher preparation curricula; strengthening relationships with local school districts; building and sustaining new strategies for involving the university in teaching preparation programs and enhancing the institutional climate for teaching and learning; creating new strategies for ensuring the quality of education graduates; initiating innovative applied research projects in education and disseminating the findings within the institution and to other schools; discovering new ways of training teachers to deal with disadvantaged youth; and providing professional leadership to influence state policies affecting the field of teacher education. (SW)

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AASCU SHOWCASE FOR EXCELLENCE: Developing Models to Enhance the Teaching Profession

The following statement was developed by the AASCU Task Force on Excellence in Education and approved by the membership on November 19, 1984.

> ***"For well over a century, the institutions that now comprise AASCU's membership made the preparation of teachers the centerpiece of their academic programs. . . ."***
>
> —Allan W. Ostar, President, AASCU
> Illinois State University
> April 16, 1984

Introduction

On November 22, 1983, at AASCU's Annual Meeting, its members approved an action program for excellence and opportunity in education, prepared by the Task Force on Excellence in Education. In adopting that policy statement, entitled "AASCU and the Nation's Schools," AASCU institutions recognized their "overriding responsibility to reevaluate and revitalize programs for the preparation of teachers, with an eye to the 21st century," and declared that in the years immediately ahead they would "face no more urgent imperative."

On developing the 1983-84 program and in formulating plans for 1984-85, the Task Force has been guided by four basic premises:

First, the current crisis in America's school system is genuine and fundamental reforms are required to cope with it.

Second, while the educational crisis is national in scope and will utimately require national attention, it must be dealt with, initially, at the local and state levels.

Third, the nationwide movememt to achieve excellence in education will succeed only if it is conceived as a partnership between the universities that prepare students for the teaching profession and the schools where that profession is practiced, thus placing the regional state colleges and universities at the juncture of educational reform.

Fourth, inasmuch as AASCU institutions profess a special heritage in the field of teacher education, it is incumbent on their chief executive officers to assume major leadership responsibilities in shaping statewide and nationwide policies designed to improve the public schools.

With that set of premises as a framework, this report to the AASCU membership will summarize the work of the Task Force in 1983-84 and propose a program for 1984-85 built around a competition among AASCU institutions for the development of models in eight categories requiring initiative and innovation to enhance the profession of teaching.

1983-84 Task Force Program and Related Activities

To assist AASCU in identifying on-going and anticipated educational reforms on a state-by-state basis, the Task Force in August 1983 requested the AASCU state representatives to convene meetings of the chief executive officers of all AASCU institutions in their respective states prior to the Annual Meeting in late November. Each state meeting was to determine what AASCU leaders believed to be a realistic program to promote educational reforms during 1983-84, with priorities varying from state to state depending on circumstances. At the 1983 Annual Meeting, the Task Force then received reports from the state representatives outlining their respective agendas for reform.

Since that time, the Task Force has received periodic reports of progress from the state representatives, including plans for state reforms contemplated during 1984-85. A summary of the AASCU reports from the states will be sent to AASCU members following the 1984 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

That AASCU members are fully aware of the leadership and partnership roles they are expected to play in helping their states and communities identify and eliminate deficiencies in America's school system is reflected in the following summary of reform-related activities that have already taken place, or are currently underway or being planned:

- By mid-1984, the Education Commission of the States had identified a total of 130 task forces or commissions in 48 states that were created to study school problems, most of them established by public officials or agencies, a few organized from within the private sector, and all including AASCU institutional representation.

- During the past two years, legislation has been enacted or is under serious consideration in 46 states that would affect one or more aspects of educational policy: teachers' salaries, academic standards, curricular requirements, student achievement, length of the school year, teacher performance and certification, and professional accountability.

- In over 20 states, AASCU governing or coordinating boards have called for staff studies of teacher preparation programs.

- Conferences of AASCU chief executive officers centering on the "excellence in education" theme have been held in a half dozen states in 1983-84 and are planned in at least a dozen others in 1984-85.

- The academic vice presidents from a total of over 100 AASCU institutions participated during the past year in one national and three regional conferences dealing with the need for integrating the liberal arts and science disciplines with teacher education programs and the importance of recruiting more talented students into the teaching profession.

- Colleges, schools, or departments of education in at least a dozen AASCU institutions are being reorganized or integrated with other administrative units of the university; more reorganizations are being contemplated.

- AASCU administrators, faculty members, or alumni are participants in 35 state studies looking specifically at "education excellence," 15 analyzing "how to improve science and mathematics instruction," 15 recommending ways "to increase economic growth by attracting high-technology industries," 14 considering ways "to integrate technology into instruction," and several others developing recommendations about vocational education, finance, and business-education partnerships.

- On May 6-8, 1984, AASCU in cooperation with the Johnson Foundation, sponsored a Conference on Teacher Preparation at the Wingspread Center in Racine, Wisconsin. Participants included academic vice presidents and deans of education from selected AASCU institutions, representative school administrators, staff members from other educational associations and the Education Commission of the States, and Task Force and AASCU staff members, who prepared the Conference agenda. Featured speakers were Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds of the California State University and President Ronald Williams of Northeastern Illinois University.

In planning the Wingspread Conference, the Task Force decided that the discussions there should center on a series of major questions–14 categories in all–which the Task Force had identified, based on its study of reports from AASCU state representatives, as being of chief concern to AASCU institutions. The discussion questions were:

- What is the most appropriate role of AASCU institutions in effecting educational reforms? How do AASCU members get top students interested in the teaching profession? What are the most effective means for determining levels of quality in education programs?

- What is the most substantial preparation AASCU institutions can provide to a prospective teacher? What should be the relationship between academic departments and school of education programs? What lessons were learned from laboratory schools? Of what value is practice teaching and field training?

- How do AASCU institutions ensure the quality of their education graduates? Of what value are exit criteria and competency tests? What should be the minimum requirements for an education degree?

- What support systems are needed for teachers in the field? Who should assume responsibility for providing in-service training for teachers? Where are the greatest needs for in-service programs?

- How should AASCU institutions energize their faculties to improve the teaching/learning process?

- How can AASCU institutions train education majors for teaching disadvantaged students in the schools, so as to respond most effectively to the special learning needs of minority and inner city youth?

- What role should AASCU institutions play in influencing state policies on such matters as finance and incentives for teachers, certification requirements, ensuring access and equity, and performance testing?

- How can AASCU members build curricula that will encourage participation of students in the teaching/learning process and also prepare teachers to teach in ways that will promote such participation?

- How can AASCU institutions revitalize and retrain college personnel?

- What expectations do state universities have relative to academic standards and high school graduation requirements?

- What efforts should be made to assist in structuring the schools to promote a more effective and prolonged student/mentor relationship?

- What can colleges and universities do to provide new students incentives to improve academic performance?

- How can AASCU institutions create an atmosphere on campus that will stimulate education and enhance excellence?

- How can AASCU institutions present a valid case for the value of higher education that will warrant additional funding from state legislatures? Do state colleges and universities have the fiscal resources to perform the job that is expected of them?

A summary of the Wingspread Conference delegates' responses to those questions is being prepared as a separate publication by AASCU for distribution both to its membership and to other professional associations.

Proposed Task Force Program For 1984-85

Prior to Wingspread, the Task Force had contemplated sponsoring a follow-up national conference on AASCU's role in the development of educational reforms in the early summer of 1984, involving not only the chief executives and other representatives of AASCU institutions, but also educators and public officials who had played leading roles in the several critiques of America's schools that were published in 1983.

In a post-Wingspread meeting convened to assess that conference and review its proceedings, members of the Task Force decided to cancel the projected summer meeting because they felt it would be premature. While many AASCU institutions are actively involved in the educational reform movement locally and regionally, the Task Force concluded, their accomplishments are receiving scant recognition from the general public via the mass media and, for that matter, from within the education profession itself.

What is required, the Task Force believes, is a national showcase for AASCU's renewed commitment to educational excellence that would simultaneously highlight the pivotal role regional state colleges and universities play

in the preparation of teachers *and* provide educators with program models designed to improve and enhance the teaching profession. That such models should be identified and accorded national recognition was one of the principal conclusions of participants in the Wingspread Conference.

Therefore, the Task Force proposes that, during the 1984-85 academic year, AASCU sponsor and conduct a competition among its member institutions for the development of program models in eight categories:

- Attracting more talented students as majors in the field of education.

- Developing more innovative curriculums in teacher preparation programs.

- Strengthening relationships with local school districts.

- Building and sustaining new strategies for involving the entire university in teacher preparation programs and enhancing the institutional climate for teaching and learning.

- Creating new strategies for ensuring the quality of education graduates.

- Initiating innovative applied research projects in education and disseminating the findings to schools and other campuses, as well as throughout the institution.

- Discovering new ways of training teachers to deal with disadvantaged youth.

- Providing professional leadership to influence state policies affecting the field of teacher education.

The Task Force requests authorization from the AASCU membership to invite all AASCU institutions to submit papers prior to May 1, 1985, describing in detail what they are currently doing in any of the eight "challenge" categories—to nominate their own "models," so to speak, for assessment and evaluation by their peers. A panel of 10 judges will be selected by the Task Force, consisting of two academic vice presidents, one dean of education,

one education faculty member, one dean of arts and sciences, and one arts and sciences faculty member--all from AASCU institutions--and two school principals (one elementary, one secondary), and two school teachers (one elementary, one secondary), to be chosen for inclusion on the panel by their respective professional associations. The panel will be convened by the Task Force as soon as possible after the 1984 Annual Meeting to refine the guidelines for the competition, following which the Task Force will issue the invitation to AASCU members to nominate their program models in one or more of the eight categories.

During May 1985, the panel of judges will select the three outstanding models in each of the eight categories, the AASCU Board of Directors will announce the winners, and AASCU will sponsor a major national "showcase for excellence" conference in the summer of 1985, at which time representatives of the institutions selected by the judges will present papers describing their programs and receive appropriate citations from AASCU. The conference also will acknowledge, with honorable mention, the names of all other AASCU institutions participating in the competition.

The Task Force will then feature "AASCU's Showcase for Excellence: Models to Enhance the Teaching Profession" in its 1984-85 Report, which, in turn will receive nationwide distribution.

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